

## "The Fabric of Duxbury"

by JANE BRADLEY

A local map shows us the byways around Duxbury, and tide charts reveal its salty terrain and motion, but an interior rhythm pulses daily here too.

Our town's hourly, daily and seasonal routines are set by people as intertwined into our domestic routines as family members — though we may not even know their names.

### second thoughts

Take the early morning along Washington Street.

There is the woman who walks the length of Washington Street alone with a walkman, knapsack and hat. She may walk it two or three times more during the course of her — and my — day, up and back, up and back. Surely you've seen her, too, as you stop for a baguette or return an overdue book at the library.

As the holidays change, I watch for the ornamental flags to vary at the Fuchs' house on Washington, and in warmer months, I anticipate a local reverend in a neon jacket on his bicycle.

On St. George Street by the Ellison Center, I love the devoted duo of labs (tan and black) who watch like an old married couple as cars steam into the school complex.

At Hall's Corner, I count on seeing Donnie helping out around the gas station, emptying the trash cans, checking with the local merchants. Later in the day, he may pass some time with the kids who congregate for an hour's cruise of the corner, and, later still, you may see him hitching a ride back to Kingston.

In the warmest months, the legion of familiar walkers and joggers and cyclists is too numerous to itemize, but the man on the funny bicycle stands out for me. You've seen it: he kind of lies prone on the seat with his legs pumping horizontally out front. Goes darn fast too, though I don't see how.

On every day, I count on the steady jogging of a local pre-school director, rain or shine, snow or sun. Her schedule varies as she passes my home on Standish Shore, but I've never known her to miss a day. Other teachers take the Powder Point route after the school bell in the afternoon, and, across town, a solitary gentleman with an ambling gait walks Standish Street with a reassuring punctuality. You can't miss him.

The individual days are marked, too: the dump thrives on weekends; Saturday evening draws crowds to mass; Sunday all the churches fill; and Wednesday is Clipper day, a time to check the obituaries, police log and real estate sales ... oh yes, and local stories and columns.

But for years, decades even, the unique pace of life in town was set by the early morning tour of the the Stewart brothers — two elderly Duxbury men who traced their route around town every day at 15 miles per hour.

Many, many was the morning I'd round the flagpole at Powder Point at 7:15 and fall in behind their old red truck snailing down Washington. A kind of royal guard, the column of cars crawled behind them — until they turned off Surplus, and we'd speed up.

And then a few months ago — must have been a Wednesday — I read an obituary for one of the brothers. It took awhile for me to connect the man I never met to the hole he left in my morning, but today I salute him — and all those whose warp and woof weave the fabric of daily life in Duxbury.

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